



**Easton Community Centre, Marlingford Road,  
Easton, NR9 5AD**

**Planning Statement**

September 2021

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies an application for all reserved matters approval pursuant to condition 2 of outline planning permission reference 2014/2611 for a proposed new community centre along Marlingford Road, Easton, and has been prepared on behalf of Easton Parish Council.

1.2 The application includes the following documents:

- Planning application form and ownership certificate
- Location plan
- Plans
- Planning Statement
- Design & Access Statement (including a section on Design Code Compliance)
- Landscape plan
- Preliminary Risk Assessment Contamination Report

1.3 The Planning Statement provides a description of the proposed development and assesses the proposal against relevant Development Plan policies and other statutory planning guidance. It also reviews the outline planning permission granted for the larger strategic development to the south and east of Easton, which this proposed development falls within.

## **2.0 Site Context, Surrounding Area and Proposed Development**

2.1 The application site is located to the east of Marlingford Road to the south side of Easton, a village located to the west of Norwich along the Southern Bypass (A47). To the north of the site is St Peters C of E Primary School; to the west an existing residential cul-de-sac (Buxton Close); to the south is planned open space; and to the east is a play area, additional open space and a new residential development, which is also part of the strategic development site.

2.2 The site is currently unusable agricultural land, which is fairly level, with a hedgerow located on the western side of the site along Marlingford Road. The site falls within a larger strategic development area granted outline planning permission in 2016 for 890 new dwellings and including associated village stores, community centre, allotments and public open space. The site for the new community centre is ideally located, as it is within a 12 minute walk distance of the existing village and the majority of the new strategic residential development to be built.

- 2.3 This application proposes a new community centre with an overall gross external area of 565 sq m. The community centre includes a Sports England compliant main sports hall (17.8m x 12.5m); changing rooms; toilets; storage areas; 2 x small office space (11.5 and 18.7 sq m); and events and meeting area with bar and kitchen (144.8 sq m).
- 2.4 The maximum ridge height of the hall to accommodate sports such as badminton, is proposed at 10.25m high, with a lower roof design for the other functions proposed.
- 2.5 Materials to be used for the community centre, include: timber cladding, red-multi brick, anthracite grey windows and doors, and grey standing seam roof, with a traditional/contemporary design.
- 2.6 A parking area is proposed to the south of the proposed centre providing a total of 22 car parking spaces. 3 of the car spaces are for disable users. 2 of the car spaces will have electrical charging points (a charging point is provided for one of the disabled user parking spaces). Cables are also to be included across the car park to allow future electric points to be provided on other spaces. A motor cycle space is provided, and both covered cycle storage (5 spaces) and uncovered cycle rails (11 spaces) are proposed within the site. Bin storage is provided at the eastern end of the car park.

### **3.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 3.1 The application site falls within a larger strategic development that surrounds the western, southern and eastern sides of the village. There is a large planning history across the strategic site relating to an outline planning permission, reserved matters and discharge of conditions. For the purpose of this application, the most relevant applications are listed as follows:

#### ***LPA reference 2014/2611 – Outline Planning Permission***

- 3.2 Outline planning permission was granted in 2016 for the erection of 890 dwellings; the creation of a village heart to feature an extended primary school, a new village hall, a retail store and areas of public open space; the relocation and increased capacity of the allotments; and associated infrastructure including public open space and highway works.
- 3.3 Planning condition 3 imposed on the outline permission required development to be carried out in accordance with a number of parameter plans. The approved Land Use Parameter Plan highlighted the provision of a village hall within the central parcel of the development beside an extended area for the primary school, and an area of open space. The image on the following page shows the location of the village hall within the outline planning permission highlighted in red. This parameter plan also identified the site area for the village hall as covering an area of 0.16 ha.



### Approved Land Use Parameter Plan

3.4 A Section 106 planning obligation was also entered into as part of the outline planning permission in 2016. The forth schedule of the S106 planning obligation dealt with the village centre site provisions, and made specific reference to the 'Village Hall Site'. The definition for the hall required the 0.16 ha of land to be transferred to the nominated body, and that the construction of the village hall would be wholly at the cost of the local authority for use as a community facility for residents of the development and surrounding area.

3.5 Within the outline planning application, Sports England were consulted about the application, and this statutory consultee made specific reference to the need to provide a sports hall to accommodate a badminton court, which could be met through the provision of a new sports hall.

#### ***LPA reference 2019/1963 – Discharge of Condition 3 Design Code***

3.6 Condition 3 of the outline planning permission for the wider strategic site required the submission and approval of a site-wide Design Code. Discharge of condition application 2019/1963 was approved in December 2019. The Design Code sets out more detail about the design requirements and coordination of the whole strategic site.

3.7 Whilst the Design Code is more focused towards the residential development, highway infrastructure and open spaces, there is reference to the new village hall in terms of its location within Easton Green, as shown in the outline permission, and also provides guidance on the design approach.

3.8 Code 5.3 for Easton Green states:

*“The village hall, shop and school extension to be contemporary constructed in contemporary materials that reflect/ compliment those proposed for the dwellings.”*

*“Gable pitched roof, generally running parallel to the street. Occasional gable end facing the street can be used with variation in roof shape and/or pitch to create feature or for turning corner.”*

**LPA reference 2021/1612 – Reserved matters application for Phase 2**

3.9 A reserved matters application was submitted in July 2021 for the development of Phase 2 of the Strategic Development site for 114 dwellings, open space (Easton Green), sustainable urban drainage systems, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks (LPA reference 2021/1612). This includes the parcel of land adjoining the south and eastern boundaries of this village hall application.

3.10 This application is currently undetermined, but provides a residential layout of the scheme and Design Code Compliance Statement that take into account the site location and design of this new community centre application.

3.11 The Design Code Compliance document for the Phase 2 development shows how that in addition to the residential development proposed and required infrastructure and open space (including a LAP and NEAP) will be provided.

3.12 This Compliance Document also provides details of the house types proposed with a contemporary/tradition appearance with grey roof tiles, boarding and window frames, red multi brick and buff bricks, and white render, which this application for the community centre has taken into account.

## **4.0 Planning Policy Context**

4.1 The Development Plan for South Norfolk comprises the following:

- Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2011, amended 2014).
- South Norfolk Local Plan, Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document (adopted 2015).
- South Norfolk Local Plan (adopted 2015).
- Easton Neighbourhood Plan (formally made part of the Development Plan in 2017).

***Joint Core Strategy***

- 4.2 Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy sets a target of at least 1,000 new homes for the Easton/Costessey area between 1st April 2008 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, and it was also highlighted through the Site Specific Allocation and Policies Document that Easton/Costessey area was a prime location to accommodate part of the 1,800 unit in the Norwich Policy Area that the JCS does not attribute to a particular settlement.

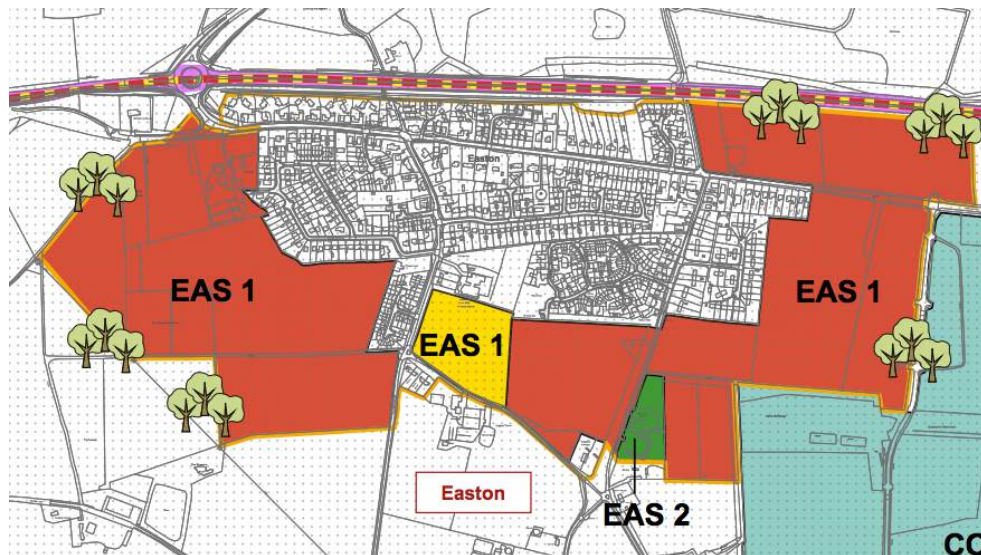
***Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document***

- 4.3 As a result of this strategic policy direction, Policy EAS 1 within the Site Specific Allocation and Policies Document provides a site allocation for approximately 900 dwellings to the south and east of Easton, with supporting facilities, including a new village centre.

- 4.4 Part 5) of Policy EAS 1 states:

*“Provision of a new village centre in the vicinity of the indicative site shown on the Easton Inset Map, to include a new village hall, village green/focal recreation space, post office/small scale convenience goods retail opportunity (approx. 250m<sup>2</sup> net), shared parking provision with primary school;”*

- 4.5 The Proposals Plan for the Site Specific Allocation and Policies Document identifies the area in yellow for a mix use allocation, including the village hall.



**Adopted Proposals Plan**

***Development Management Policies Document***

- 4.6 The adopted Development Management Policies Document provides more detailed guidance in relation to the design of the scheme. Relevant policies that apply to this application are:

- 4.7 *Policy DM 1.1 Ensuring development management contributed to achieving sustainable development in South Norfolk* – This policy states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Part c) of the policies states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, will be approved without unnecessary delay, unless other material consideration indicates otherwise. Part e) states that the Council will give significant weight to supplementary guidance and community led plans where they are relevant.
- 4.8 *Policy DM 1.2 Requirement for infrastructure through planning obligations* – Part 2) of this policy requires infrastructure to be secured through planning obligations, and that they should deliver open space, play space or other facilities (or a contribution) required directly to serve the development and contribute to local community facilities.
- 4.9 *Policy DM 1.3 Sustainable location of development* – Part 1) of this policy requires all new development should be located, so that it has a positive contribution to sustainable development within the District, and development should be directed to Allocated Sites within the Local Plan.
- 4.10 *Policy DM 1.4 Environmental Quality and local distinctiveness* – This policy seeks to ensure that high quality and positive environmental improvements are achieved in all developments. The policy also seeks to achieve a net environmental improvement, and where opportunities exist to provide a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. It also seeks to enhance biodiversity net gain for nature.
- 4.11 *Policy DM 3.8 Design Principles* – This policy seeks to achieve high quality development that respects adjoining structures, spaces, routes and local landscape.
- 4.12 *Policy DM 3.11 Road Safety and the free flow of traffic* – Policy DM 3.11 seeks to ensure developments will not endanger highway safety or the satisfactory functioning of the highway network.
- 4.13 *Policy DM 3.12 Provision of vehicle parking* – This policy refers to the need to comply with the Council's parking standards, which is provided by the Norfolk Parking Standards 2007. For village halls, the requirement is 1 car space per 30 sq m of gross floor area, including a bus/coach drop-off and pick-up point. 6% of the parking spaces should be designed for disabled users. For cycle parking, 1 visitor space per 35 sq m, and 1 space per 4 staff.
- 4.14 *Policy DM 3.13 Amenity, noise and quality* – Policy DM 3.13 requires developments to ensure a reasonable standard of amenity is maintained in relation to privacy, outlook, light, and noise and other environmental pollution.
- 4.15 *Policy DM 3.16 Improving the level of local community facilities* – This policy highlights the new community facilities and services will be permitted within development boundaries.

4.16 *Policy DM 4.2 Sustainable drainage and water management* – This policy sets out the requirement to provide sustainable drainage measures that are fully integrated within the design. The policy also sets out drainage technical requirements to be applied to developments.

4.17 *Policy DM 4.3 Facilities for the collection of recycling and waste* – This policy requires all new developments to provide sufficient facilities to simply store and dispose of their recycling and waste, and is well integrated into the design of the scheme.

#### ***Easton Neighbourhood Plan***

4.18 The Easton Neighbourhood Plan was formally made part of the Development Plan in September 2017 and provides further policy guidance in relation to the development of site allocation EAS1.

4.19 Theme 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to provision of Community Facilities and Policy 11 of the Plan sets out the requirement to provide a new village hall with associated parking to prevent pavement parking and other road safety issues. It also highlights the requirement to provide a suitable multi-use indoor activity facility, all of which must be with easy access from all parts of Easton.

#### ***New Greater Norwich Local Plan***

4.20 The Council is currently working on a new Greater Norwich Local Plan, which is going through an Examination in Public. The target date for the adoption of the new Local Plan is September 2022.

4.21 It should be noted that new Local Plan includes a similar Policy EAS1, which seeks to accommodate approximately 1,044 homes across the strategic allocation. The requirement to provide a new village hall remains one of the highlighted enhanced facilities within the policy.

#### ***NPPF 2021***

4.22 The development has also been designed, taking into account planning guidance contained within the NPPF 2021.

4.23 Throughout the NPPF there is a requirement to achieve sustainable development, that meets the following three objectives set out within paragraph 8:

- a) an economic objective – to help building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, providing accessible services to reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- c) an environmental objective to protect and enhance natural and built environments.



4.24 In support of this approach in a positive way, paragraph 10 states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of decision making, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

4.25 Section 8 of the NPPF sets out national guidance towards “Promoting healthy and safe communities”. Paragraph 93 specifically refers to the provision of new social, recreational and cultural facilities, stating that decisions should:

- a) *plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) *take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

4.26 Design guidance is provided by Section 12 of the NPPF and paragraph 130 states:

*Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

**Other planning guidance documents**

4.27 Other planning guidance documents that have been referred to in the Design & Access Statement include:

- South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD
- National Design Guide
- Sport England Design Guidance

## 5.0 Planning Considerations

### Principle of development

- 5.1 Policy EAS 1 within both the adopted Site Specific Allocation and Policies Document and emerging Local Plan set out the development requirements to be delivered through the planning application process. Within the centre of the development to the south of the primary school, Policy EAS 1 identifies an area of mixed use land, including a village centre and a new village hall. The policy also requires the provision of a focal recreational space.
- 5.2 Outline planning permission was granted in 2016 for a strategic development to the south and east of Easton, and included a community centre to the south of the primary school. The approved parameter plans and S106 planning obligation attached to the outline planning permission, set out the location of the new community centre and require an area of 0.16 hectares to accommodate the centre and associated parking. The outline planning permission and S106 planning obligation also require 0.84 hectares of land to be provided for the primary school extend site area.
- 5.3 Reserved matters application reference 2021/1612 for the Phase 2 development to the east and which is currently being considered by the Council, shows how the 0.16 hectares for the new village hall and 0.84 hectares extended primary school area are accommodated with the Phase 2 proposals.
- 5.4 This therefore demonstrates how the principle of this application for the new community centre complies with adopted and emerging Local Plan policies and ensures a focal community facility will be delivered in a highly sustainable location that was planned through the outline planning permission.

### **Design and specification**

- 5.5 The new community centre has been designed to meet the aspirations of the Parish Council and what was envisaged through the Neighbourhood Plan process, which involved engagement with local residents. The proposed community centre, including an indoor recreation facility, therefore meets the requirements of Policy 11 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.6 The size and height of the sports hall has been designed to meet Sport England's standards for a multi-purpose and user groups. The height of this part of the building will allow for badminton and other recreational uses. Changing facilities have also been provided to meet the required standards.
- 5.7 The Design & Access Statement submitted with the application sets out the design approach to the scheme, comprising of a traditional/contemporary appearance, using red brick, timber cladding and roofing material to complement the house designs within Phase 2, but will ensure the building appears as a focal point within the development.
- 5.8 The design approach therefore follows the guidelines set out in Code 5.3 of the approved Design Code for the site, and the high quality approach is also compliant with design guidance contained within the South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD, National Design Guide and the NPPF 2021.

### **Parking and Transport**

- 5.9 The proposed development proposes a total of 22 car parking spaces. This amount of parking complies with the parking standard requirement for village halls within the Norfolk Planning Standards 2007.
- 5.10 The proposed 3 disable parking spaces, represent 14% of the total number of spaces, which provides more than what is required under the parking standards.
- 5.11 Secure cycle parking to be provided complies with the standards, and the central circulation area will allow for a bus/coach drop off and pick-up point within the application site.
- 5.12 The proposed development therefore complies with the parking standards and Policy DM 3.12 of the Adopted Development Management Policies Document.
- 5.13 The vehicular access to the site has been designed to meet highway specification requirements.
- 5.14 The proposals are therefore not considered to have a harmful impact on highway safety and is compliant with Policies DM 3.11 and 3.12 of the Adopted Development Management Policies Document.

### ***Neighbours amenity***

- 5.15 The nearest properties to the proposed new community centre are the residential properties at Buxton Close. These are considered to be located far enough away from the centre to ensure that the neighbours privacy, outlook and light are not adversely affected by the proposed development. The sports hall and multi-function events and meeting area are located on the eastern side of the building, set further away from the neighbouring properties, and this will ensure that impact of any noise and disturbance will be kept to a minimum. The proposed development therefore complies with Policy DM 3.13 of the Adopted Development Management Policies Document.

### ***Other material considerations***

- 5.16 The Design and Access Statement confirms that the design of the community centre will be compliant with the Accessibility regulations within Part M compliance, and that the proposed building will incorporate solar panels, air source heat pump, with individual room controls and restrictors on water fixtures to limit water usage per person.
- 5.17 The proposed development makes provision for refuse storage within the site to the eastern side of the car park, which will be accessible from the highway, compliant with Policy DM 4.3 of the Adopted Development Management Policies Document.
- 5.18 A Preliminary Risk Assessment Contamination Report is included with the planning application, which highlights that contamination is not likely to be present, but due to potential uncertainties, it is recommended that a further ground investigation is recommended, which can be controlled by planning condition.

## **6.0 Community Infrastructure Levy**

- 6.1 The proposed new community hall falls with the new Use Class F2, previously part of Class D1. Under the Council CIL regulations this non-residential use has a nil CIL charge applied to it.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has set out the planning considerations for the proposed new Easton community centre proposed at Marlingford Road, and found the principle of development to be acceptable. The new centre is proposed within a highly sustainable location and will provide a community facility compliant with adopted Development Plan policies and follows the design requirements of the outline planning permission granted in 2016 and approved design code.

- 7.2 The design and appearance of the proposed community centre will be sympathetic to the surrounding area, whilst creating a focal point within the wider strategic development. Parking provision, neighbour impact, and contamination have been considered acceptable against Local Plan policies.
- 7.3 On this basis, it is considered the proposed development is compliant with adopted Development Plan policies, and also with other guidance, including Sport England requirements, supplementary design guidance, the National Design Guide and the NPPF. Accordingly, reserved matters approval should be granted for the proposed new community centre.